

St. Michael the Archangel Catholic School
Parent and Teacher Organization General Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, May 6th, 2008

The fifth and final meeting of the 2007-2008 St. Michael School Parent and Teacher Organization was held in the Parish Center on Tuesday, May 6th, at 7 pm. PTO Board President Marylynn Fitzgerald, President-elect Peggy Thompson, Treasurer Louis Prosser, VP of Fundraising Colleen Ueland, VP-elect of Fundraising Marybeth Brejnik, VP of Social Sheila Schlageter, VP of Volunteers Maureen Beeler, VP-elect of Volunteers Robin Evans, VP of Education Cheryl Reid, and Secretary Laura Usher were all present, as well as school Principal Dr. Sarah Wannemuehler and Assistant Principal Molly Carlin. Forty-two parents and teachers were also in attendance.

Mrs. Fitzgerald welcomed everyone and began the meeting with a prayer. She then introduced Mrs. Kathleen Langevin, who along with Mrs. Andrea Adams, lead this year's StMS Student Council. Mrs. Langevin complemented each of the student council members for his or her ability to be positive role models, and expressed how proud she is of them for being good examples of future Christian leaders. The following council members each took a moment to reflect on what it has meant to them to represent their student body and gave examples of the many service projects they participated in. Connor Riser served as President, Taylor Wanbaugh as Vice President, Megan Kunkel was Mr. Gauthier's 8th grade class representative, and Kevin Fitzgerald represented Mrs. Davey's 7th grade class, while Connor Sutton was Mrs. Wasley's 7th grade class representative.

Mrs. Peggy Thompson announced the new PTO Board Members for the 2008-2009 school year:

Laura Grelck- President-elect
Jenipher Free- VP-elect of Fundraising
Robin Evans- VP of Volunteers
Sandy Lyons- VP of Social
Therese Flaherty- VP of Education
Kermit Dowdy- Treasurer
Jennifer Cullen- Secretary

Mrs. Thompson thanked the seven board members whose terms will end with the close of this school year and presented each of them with a pink Gerber Daisy potted plant. She gave a special acknowledgement to the four charter members, Marylynn Fitzgerald, Colleen Ueland, Maureen Beeler, and Louis Prosser, who served a two- year term on the PTO Board.

PTO Update by Marylynn Fitzgerald:

Mrs. Fitzgerald updated the audience on the PTO profits and expenditures for the current school year, but highlighted the fact that the organization has raised \$300,000 over the past two years. Profits from this year's auction topped \$108,000, even with 100 less tickets being sold compared to last year. The Jingle Bell Run also exceeded last year's profits, and will promise to be even more successful in 2008 with it being added to the Grand Prix of Racing. The one area that saw a decrease in profits was with the Christmas Tree Sales. Although this event presented families with an opportunity to make a memory, the long man- hours required to staff the tree lot on multiple weekends in December convinced the Board to discontinue the Christmas Tree Sale. An incredible ongoing money- maker for our school is the Angel Bucks Program, with profits of almost \$35,000 so far this year. Mrs. Fitzgerald touched on the ways the PTO has used the funds to enhance many different areas of StMS. This year all athletic and band fees were paid and new musical instruments and materials for the drama department were purchased. This summer the batteries will be replaced in all of the middle school laptop computers and possibly another SMART Board will be bought. A new server was installed last year that enables access to Edline. Several new after-school activities were added this school year, such as the very successful Science Olympiad. The teachers were offered the opportunity to go on conferences and several speakers were brought in for the benefit of the students and parents.

After the incident in which a Cardinal Gibbons Lacrosse player was treated with an Automated External Defibrillator (AED), the board decided that the PTO would purchase several of these life-saving devices after accessing the needs of the entire St. Michael Campus. The parents and coaches of the StMS Lacrosse teams will be reimbursed for the one they bought and another portable device will be added for use by the athletic teams. There will be a wall mounted AED located in the school building and the PTO will donate another permanent AED to be placed in the church.

Mrs. Fitzgerald readdressed the subject of mandatory volunteering which was an issue discussed at the last general meeting. Many people voiced their opinions against the idea and therefore everyone will continue to be encouraged to volunteer by filling out one of the checklist forms. The forms are available on the PTO website. To date, about 150 completed forms have been turned, and Mrs. Robin Evans is in the process of entering them into the PTO database. The new software will enable her and the committee chairs to track all volunteers.

Mrs. Fitzgerald closed by expressing her gratitude to everyone for the honor she has had serving as PTO President the last two years. She reflected on how far the organization has come since its initiation and that she is confident the new board will take it even further.

School and Building Update by Dr. Sarah Wannemuehler:

The SACS visit in April went extremely well with the team being impressed with our students, teachers, building and especially with the Bishop's visit. At the request of Monsignor Tim, Bishop Burbidge met with the SACS team and discussed his visit to StMS earlier this year. It is such a wonderful experience for the students to see the Bishop face to face on multiple occasions. The only recommendation made by the SACS team was for our school to better track its graduates; for example, their SAT scores and what colleges they attend.

Our 8th grade class will host a celebration for the second group of students from StMS that will be graduating from High School this year. A survey will be given to each of the graduates and the data collected will abide by the SACS team recommendation. This annual reception will continue to be another StMS tradition. The formal report from the SACS visit will be returned in approximately 20 days.

The eighth graders continue to be busy, starting with the Thursday night lock-in purchased by their parents at the auction, followed by the first 8th grade retreat on Monday, May 12th. This whole day retreat will give the students the opportunity to reflect on their experience at StMS and where they are going next. Dr. Wannemuehler is currently conducting exit interviews with the 55 graduating 8th graders. Each student is required to recite Saint Paul's Letter to the Corinthians and they are able to give positive and negative feedback about their years at our school. The eighth graders and their parents are invited to Monsignor Tim's house for a cookout equipped with a DJ and professional photographer. The year will end with a

fun trip to Busch Gardens. Our closing school Mass will be held on May 30th beginning at 9:45 am, followed by the end of the year awards and finally with the promotion of the children to their next grade level.

Dr. Wannemuehler was able to view the architect's three-dimensional tour of the proposed building and highlighted some of what she saw. The nine new classrooms will allow for the third additional tract of students. There will be a high school size gymnasium with an elevated stage and storage area underneath the stage. A new impressive entrance will grace the office side of the building. Once in the building, turn to the left and there will be a Chapel with the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. The addition of a Chapel will allow St. Michael's to show what our school is really about. The new eating space or Dining Hall will give students the opportunity to exhibit good manners while being in communion with others at the table. The larger eating space will accommodate more students at one time, allowing for longer lunch periods. There will be a large storage and food preparation area at the back of the Dining Hall that can be converted to a professional kitchen at some time in the future. Monsignor Tim has signed a contract with the construction company of Clancy and Theys. This company is presently completing two large projects, but should be ready to break ground on our new building early next fall and be solely committed to our project. If things go exactly as planned, the expansion will be completed for the 2009-2010 school year. Dr. Wannemuehler expressed her gratitude for the church's donation of \$500,000 that got the capital campaign underway. She and her husband, Tom, will be making their own personal contribution. At this time, Mrs. Fitzgerald presented Dr. Wannemuehler with a check of \$70,000 on behalf of the PTO to go towards the building fund. Dr. Wannemuehler closed by thanking Mrs. Fitzgerald for her leadership in the PTO.

Speaker: Jason Curtis, Principal of Cardinal Gibbons High School:

Mr. Curtis' focus was on extracurricular activities in the high school setting. Extracurricular can be defined as any activity that takes place outside of class time and can range from sports to a surfing club. Mr. Curtis dispelled the myth that one must participate in a long list of extracurricular activities in order to be accepted into college. A school may look closer at student who is deeply involved and possesses a real interest in an area, or they consistently seek leadership roles in multiple activities. According to Mr. Curtis, the number one thing colleges and universities focus on is a student's

academic records. Which means having the right course load, with challenging classes and doing well in those classes, is crucial. However, extracurriculars do play an important role in the success one has in college and beyond. Statistically 50% of students admitted to college do not graduate in six years. Research shows that a person's interpersonal skills, caring about and working with other people, are completely formed during the ages of 14 to 23 years. Experiences had in high school are so incredibly important because students are given the opportunities to put together the skills they will need to be happy, healthy young adults. Nutrition, enough sleep, alcohol and drug use are also important elements during this developmental stage in one's life. High school is the time when kids are given the chance to connect with the experiences they have had, which in turn gives them the opportunities to grow. During this time they learn the balance between the different areas of their life. Having these skills as an adolescent helps with establishing the balance of the Family, Faith, Work, and Civic aspects of their adult lives.

Mr. Curtis says parents should look critically at the offerings of extracurricular activities at their child's high school. There should be opportunities for a wide range of students to participate. Whether your child is in a high level or lower level of ability in a particular area, there should be an activity that offers each one an opportunity to have a solid experience. It is also important to look for activities that allow the students to direct their own experience, which ultimately will expand their leadership skills. At Cardinal Gibbons High School, there are many totally student driven activities, particularly with charity work. These activities move them from something they have participated in to something they have built. These same students tend to possess active roles in their church and community as adults. It is important to remember that in Catholic Education, it is about the legacy we are building. We as parents should be committed to our schools, not for our children, but for our children's children.

Another point Mr. Curtis made was that the activities must be integrated with what is happening on the campus. If they take the student away from the heart of the school, the activity can have a negative effect. Experiences made in isolation are not healthy for the child. Participating in things that bring him or her "close to the matter", which means they focus on loving one another, is the best type of activity.

Students should have the chance to get into an extracurricular activity later in their high school career. They should have the opportunity to experiment and should not feel obligated to start everything when they are freshmen.

One parent asked Mr. Curtis how to know when your child is too involved. He suggested to first listen to your instincts and to get feedback from the educators in your child's life. Seek out their teachers and coaches and ask if he or she is happy, have they reached their plateau, etc. High school is the time for these children to have balance in their lives. When they get to college they have less and less of the opportunity for this because the focus becomes getting a particular internship or job related to their chosen career. High school is the time of gaining self-awareness and this needs to be a natural process for the child.

Mr. Curtis was also asked if he could touch on the future plans of Cardinal Gibbons, which will be celebrating 100 years in existence next year. Currently the enrollment is at full capacity with 1200 students. There are no immediate plans to expand the current campus, but they are committed to accommodating the Catholic Elementary and Middle Schools in the area. Mr. Curtis closed by expressing how St. Michael is a very special school to him and it would be his pleasure to be of help to others as a school parent or as the Principal of Cardinal Gibbons High School.

Mrs. Fitzgerald thanked everyone for his or her attendance and the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.